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GST COLLECTION FOR OCT IS SECOND HIGHEST-EVER, NEXT ONLY TO APRIL

GST collections increased 13% to ₹1.72 lakh crore in October, the second highest-ever, helped by momentum in the economy and festive demand

BUT MANUFACTURING SLIPS ON WEAK ORDERS

Manufacturing activities decelerated in October as new orders increased at the slowest pace in a year, triggering a softer rise in output and employment, according to S&P Global India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index. "Anecdotal evidence suggested that subdued demand for certain products and fierce competition stymied the upturn," the survey said

RUPEE SINKS AMID FOREIGN CAPITAL FLIGHT

- The rupee depreciated 4 paise to settle at 83.28 against the US dollar on Wednesday, tracking a strong greenback against major rivals overseas and unabated foreign capital outflows
- Forex traders said disappointing macroeconomic data from India and Foreign Institutional Investors outflows put pressure on the rupee

₹1.66 lakh cr

THE AVERAGE GROSS MONTHLY GST COLLECTION IN THE CURRENT FISCAL

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

DELHI HOTELS, CLUBS GOT DISCOUNTS EVEN AFTER EXCISE WAS SCRAPPED. GOVT BOOKS HAVEN'T RECORDED PAYMENT

Liquor scam 2.0? CBI sniffs ₹1.5K cr discount swindle

Arvind Kejriwal, Delhi CM

Kejriwal summoned by ED. ED targeting leaders of almost all parties in opposition. Denial of bail has become a political weapon. Time for courts to wake up to the blatant misuse of PMLA

Kapil Sibal, senior advocate

Tryst with the CBI in April

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had in April last appeared before the CBI in the same excise policy scam. "The CBI asked around 56 questions regarding the excise policy, including when and why the policy was started," he said, adding the questioning was friendly

SHAHID FARIDI @ New Delhi

THE CBI is looking into a new discount swindle worth around ₹1,500 crore in liquor purchase by the Delhi government.

In the course of its probe into the alleged liquor scam in Delhi, the agency reportedly found that after the controversial policy was rolled back and the entire trade was taken over by the government, the discounts that were earlier offered by manufacturers and wholesalers, stopped as they are not reflected in the government's books. However, liquor manufacturers and wholesalers continued to offer these discounts to other purchasers such as hotels, clubs and restaurants in Delhi.

Sources said the CBI smelt a rat in the discontinuation of the discount and is looking into the possibility of the AAP leadership routing part of this discount to Punjab, which is also ruled by the party, and receiving a part in cash in Delhi. The agency sleuths believe that there is no reason for the manufacturers not to offer discounts to the Delhi government, especially since it controls whose brand will be sold in the city.

According to sources, the agency estimates that the Delhi government would have sold liquor worth at least ₹15,000 crore ever since the private players were ousted by scrapping the previous policy and received at least 10% cash discount on this sale.

AAP convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is likely to be questioned by the Enforcement Directorate on Thursday on why the manufacturers stopped offering discounts to the Delhi government when they are giving it to all the other buyers.

When the new liquor policy was introduced by the Delhi government for the year 2021-22, hefty discounts, ranging from 10% to 35%, were offered by some manufacturers to the wholesalers, and by wholesalers to the retailers. These discounts were given by using the instrument of credit notes, which are legally permissible. It is a practice followed across the country.

According to the CBI, these credit notes had become the main instrument of generating cash for payment of kickback to the AAP functionaries. Since the now-scrapped 2021-22 policy had withdrawn the government from the liquor business and handed it over completely to the private players, it was the private players, including manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers who generated the cash and allegedly paid the kickbacks. A large number of manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers have been arrested by the CBI and the ED.

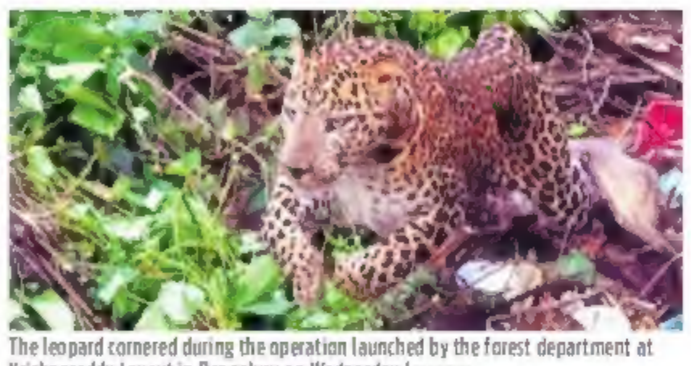
Elusive leopard shot dead in Bengaluru

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

AFTER a five-day operation, a forest official shot dead the elusive leopard in the city on Wednesday afternoon.

"All attempts were made to capture the leopard alive. But when it attacked two of our staffers, orders to shoot it were issued," Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) Subhash Malkhade told *The New Indian Express*.

Special teams of personnel from the forest and police departments and the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike's (BBMP) forest cell were formed to capture the leopard. Personnel from the special Leopard Task Force (LTF) from Mysuru were also summoned. Forest officials were closely monitoring the leopard after it was spotted at Krishna Reddy Layout near Begur on Tuesday night.



The leopard cornered during the operation launched by the forest department at Krishnareddy Layout in Bengaluru on Wednesday | EXPRESS

"The leopard was seen entering an abandoned incomplete building in the layout on Monday night. On Tuesday evening, it was seen entering the building and coming out of it. When the leopard was sighted again on Wednesday morning at the same location, we decided to capture it," said a forest official, who was part of the operation.

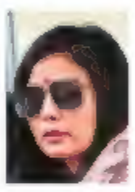
The task to tranquilize and capture the leopard started at 9.30am. The leopard was shot dead when it attacked the two forest staffers around 2.30pm, the official said.

"Bannerghatta Biological Park (BBP) veterinarian Kiran Kumar darted the animal after seeing it outside the abandoned building. However, the leopard escaped into the bushes. Assuming that the leopard was sedated, Dr Kiran went looking for it in the bushes. Suddenly, the leopard pounced on him, injuring him on the neck," a senior forest official said. P2

Mahua Moitra to appear before ethics panel today

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

TRINAMOOL Congress MP Mahua Moitra's Parliament login credentials were used as many as 47 times from Dubai to raise questions in Parliament, BJP MP Nishikant Dubey alleged on Wednesday citing media reports.



"If the news is true, then all the MPs of country should stand against Mahua ji's corruption. Hiranandani asked questions in LS for Hiranandani. Are we MPs for promoting selfish interests of capitalists", Dubey said in a post on X on Wednesday.

Dubey, who triggered a row with the 'cash-for-query' allegation against Moitra, refused to speak on the issue further, citing parliamentary rules. "Please forgive me, she (Mahua Moitra) has to appear before the ethics committee on November 2 and there are some rules of Parliament," he said.

Shinde buys time, says okay with Maratha quota

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

THE all-party leaders' meeting called over the Maratha quota stir on Tuesday passed a resolution in favour of reservation for the community. Speaking to reporters after the all-party meet, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said that the state government is committed to granting reservation to Marathas but needs some time to study the matter and come up with a formula that will pass legal scrutiny.

The meeting was attended by 32 leaders, including NCP chief Sharad Pawar and deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis. Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray was not invited.

Shinde, who chaired the meeting, said the leaders discussed all issues pertaining to Maratha reservations and agreed to grant the quota.

However, "there are some issues that need to be addressed to give fool-proof reservations to the Maratha community", Shinde said, pointing to the curative petitions filed in the Supreme Court. "Besides, the state government-appointed Justice Sandeep Shinde committee has been given two more months to study the data and documents of the Nizam era. Most of the old records are in Urdu or Modi script, which will take time to be translated into Marathi. We do not want to do anything in a hurry that will be challenged in court. We want to give reservations that will not get struck down," Shinde said.

Eknath Shinde, Devendra Fadnavis address the media after all-party meet

At the all-party meet, the leaders also expressed displeasure over the burning of houses, offices and damaging government and private properties by protesters.

Surjewala warns mins against going public on party issues

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

AICC general secretary and Karnataka in-charge Randeep Singh Surjewala on Wednesday warned ministers, MLAs and other Congress functionaries not to issue public statements on power sharing in the government and said those violating this order will face disciplinary action.

"We have discussed this issue. If they continue to do so, the Congress leadership would think of taking appropriate action against them. All ministers, MLAs and functionaries should adhere to the party's rules and regulations. We will crack the whip if they ignore our warning. If they have any difference of opinion, they are welcome to express it with me or the KPCC president," he told reporters after holding a marathon meeting with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister and Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president DK Shivakumar and other leaders.

Surjewala said the ministers should focus on the development of their districts. P4

EXPRESS READ

Free water, power for govt schools: Siddu

Bengaluru: Free electricity and drinking water will be given to all government schools in the state with immediate effect, said CM Siddaramaiah during the 68th Kannada Rajyotsava celebrations on Wednesday | P4

THERMODYNAMIC PUZZLE CRACKED

The optical tweezer apparatus at IISc. Inset: (from left) Sudeesh Krishnamurthy, Rajesh Ganapathy and Ajay Sood | SUDEESH KRISHNAMURTHY

IISc scientists design 100% efficient 'micro heat engine'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

AFTER years of struggle, a "micro heat engine", which can produce maximum power at maximum efficiency, has been successfully designed by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR) here.

Practical heat engines are limited to a theoretical efficiency called the Carnot limit, which sets a cap on how much heat can be converted to useful work. "Since the 1970s, people have been attempting to address the power-efficiency tradeoff. In the early 2000s, researchers explored microscopic systems to overcome this challenge. In 2017, a paper claimed that it was impossible to solve this thermodynamic puzzle," said Sudeesh Krishnamurthy, former Ph D student at the Department of Physics, IISc, and first author of the study published in Nature Communications on October 27.

Heat engines convert heat into work. For example, moving a piston in a certain direction. For an engine to be 100% efficient when the process is reversed – the piston returns to its original state – there should be no heat wasted, which is what was proposed by French physicist Sadi Carnot in 1824.

This is only theoretically possible if the process happens extremely slowly. But that also means that the power output will be zero, making the engine practically useless, according to a press release from the IISc. This is known as power-efficiency tradeoff. CONTINUED ON: P8